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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 3 October 1990, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. PEERTHUM (Vice-President)	(Mauritius)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. PEERTHUM (Vice-President)	(Mauritius)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Farah (Djibouti)
Mr. Wong (Singapore)
Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam)
Mr. El-Talhy (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
Mr. Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)
Mr. Ould Didi (Mauritania)
Mr. Latortue (Haiti)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. FARAH (Djibouti) (interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset, on my own behalf and that of my delegation, to extend our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your long, proven record in public service, coupled with your broad, diplomatic skills and keen sensitivity to the manifold issues before us, makes you uniquely qualified to guide us, with a sure hand, in our deliberations.

I wish also to take this opportunity to convey to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba, our sincere appreciation of the fine leadership qualities he brought to bear on the conduct of the last session.

We are proud, as usual, to recognize the quiet but effective diplomacy ceaselessly employed by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, both in his quest for enduring solutions to the many intractable conflicts and in his efforts to enhance awareness of the key problems of development. We value highly his wise and just stewardship as he perseveres in steering us carefully away from collision and confrontation towards co-operation and consensus. His report on the work of the Organization is very much to the point, and objective and comprehensive.

Today is the day Germany reunites, meaning the end of the indifference to the sufferings and deprivation of the people on the other side of what used to be called the wall. We salute the new German State, which symbolizes the realization of the aspirations of the German nation. In the same vein, we also wish to record our deep joy at the merger between two sister nations, North and South Yemen.

(Mr. Farah, Djibouti)

The Middle East has suddenly become explosive. This region has had, it must be said, more than its share of deprivation and suffering. It is most distressing to see the usually innocuous Arab family squabble degenerating into tragedy by the sacrifice of Kuwait, a small State but one rich in resources, on the altar of a more powerful neighbour's greed, so dividing the ranks of the Arab countries.

Your inaugural address set the tone, in clear and eloquent terms, when you said:

> "The international community's commitment to the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members is for all States, but in particular for the small States, the guarantee against the threat or use of force against their integrity and independence". (A/45/PV.1, p. 6)

The invasion and continued occupation of Kuwait by Iraq is an intolerable anachronism, incompatible with the norms of international law. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait cannot be subject to compromise. Djibouti stands with the international community in its effort to resolve the Gulf crisis. We call for the unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait and the release of all hostages, regardless of race or nationality. We therefore express our resolute condemnation of Iraq's invasion and illegal occupation of Kuwait.

We are very distressed by the ever-more-distant prospect of an Iraqi pull-out, the more so because Iraq's continuing intransigence will doubtless make an already tense situation worse, posing grave risks for the region in particular and the world in general. We therefore strongly urge the Iraqi authorities, on behalf of their people, Arab honour and integrity, to be extremely cautious and very flexible, in order to avoid the imminent danger of the disintegration and devastation of all that Arab resources and ingenuity have accomplished over a quarter of a century.

(Mr. Farah, Djibouti)

The United Nations is at the threshold of a new era free of rancour and ideological divisions. This is the first session of the General Assembly after the cold war which is likely to consider defining the nascent, new world order, and by so doing making the commitment of the United Nations to collective security an effective one. We are deeply encouraged to see the Security Council beginning to exercise, in accordance with the Charter, its "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". We earnestly hope that this fresh optimism will not be confined solely to selected areas of conflict, but will rather extend to all regions, and particularly to the most intractable problem, that is, the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and internationally recognized national sovereignty.

Despite this fresh optimism, born of the improvement in the international political climate, the Middle East remains at boiling point because of the suffering of the Palestinians. The intifadah, a mass revolt by the people against oppression, carnage and foreign domination, has of course not faded from the scene. The Palestinians live in a precarious situation of continuous danger. That the Palestinian problem is still not being discussed in a dialogue or at a properly structured international conference is a clear sign of the terrifying stalemate in international diplomacy. In this context, Israel will surely never make one step forward towards peace before violence destroys any chance of there being any.

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(Mr. Farah, Djibouti)

We urge the United States to use its considerable influence over Israel to put an end to Israel's intransigence. Israel has become impervious to international reprobation and the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The historic changes in the policy of the Palestinians, that is, cessation of all hostilities and acceptance of the two-State principle based on relevant United Nations resolutions, required unequivocal reciprocity on the part of Israel: acceptance of the principle of land for peace, and full restoration of political rights to the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination.

Outright rejection of the notion of the Palestinian State is wholly unjustified. Pressing for increasingly unilateral concessions from the Palestinians without a corresponding flexibility from Israel would in no wise serve the cause of peace.

In Lebanon, fratricidal wars are exacting a heavy toll on the defenceless civilian population. Fifteen years of sectarian civil strife, compounded by proxy war waged on its soil, have caused untold destruction and suffering, and have created confusion, division and anarchy. We are hopeful that the new initiatives taken by the Government of Elias Harawi will go a long way towards restoring peace, security and stability in Lebanon.

We welcome independent Namibia to the community of nations. Nearly three decades of continuous diplomatic efforts to overcome the impasse have finally borne fruit, and Namibia is now in our midst as a free and sovereign nation. We take pride in its commitment to peace, human rights and economic pragmatism. Such a positive spirit of leadership shall pave the way for genuine national reconciliation.

In South Africa, the word "change" is being overplayed in the mind and emotions of the black majority. President De Klerk continues to give the

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impression to his country and the world that an era of change lies ahead. Yes, there is a demonstration of an intention to carry out reform programmes. The freeing of Mr. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners is a move in the right direction. South Africa, however, remains a country beset by deep-seated mistrust and division. Much needs to be done to translate Mr. De Klerk's platitudes and ambiguities into a meaningful and irreversible reform programme.

We strongly recommend the scrapping of repressive measures and institutional racism, the end of the undiluted minority rule, the affirmation of political and economic rights, and the creation of democratic institutions. When talking of change or hope, we can but recall the immortal prophecy of the late Alan Paton, that indefatigable literary giant and anti-apartheid activist, who over 30 years ago wrote:

"South Africa is the kind of country where one is filled with hope on Monday only to be catapulted to utter despair on Tuesday."

The new Constitution must offer full political rights to the majority black population on a non-racial, pluralistic and democratic basis. To that end, De Klerk should institute credible measures for the release of all political prisoners, the lifting of the state of emergency, the abolition of the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act which, taken together, form the core of the perpetuation of the reprehensible system of apartheid.

With regard to Liberia, we express our deep concern about the continuous conflict and sufferings of the civilian population and the loss of thousands of human lives, as well as the influx of refugees. The Republic of Djibouti calls upon the belligerents to put an end to the massacre of the innocent population, to end the fratricidal conflict and to lead the country towards a peacefully elected government.

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Djibouti welcomes the peace agreement concluded recently by the four factions in the Cambodian conflict. The decision to establish the Supreme National Council, a transitional legitimate body that will reunite all the parties to the conflict, is an essential step towards a political settlement of the Cambodian question. We strongly encourage a general, peaceful settlement, which will lead the Cambodian people to a free, independent State, peaceful, united, neutral and non-aligned.

With respect to the Western Sahara, we support the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity directed towards the search for a lasting solution to the problem.

We are a few months away from the third anniversary of the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan and, as yet, there is no prospect of peace in sight. We believe that peace and tranquillity will continue to elude the Afghan people in the absence of a representative and popularly elected Government.

In the Korean peninsula, we are quite encouraged by the continuing dialogue between the two States, and hope that these exchanges will effectively contribute to an improvement in relations and further enhance the prospects for peaceful unification. In accordance with the principle of universality and consistent with the earnest desire to ease tensions in the peninsula, we support the admission of both Koreas, separately or simultaneously, to full membership in the United Nations.

A clearer demonstration of the relaxation of the hitherto existent tension in super-Power rivalry is the World Summit for Children, which has just concluded a major and bold undertaking to save millions of children from ill-treatment, misery, sickness, poverty and malnutrition.

This is not an exclusive phenomenon of the impoverished third world. Many children in the rich world live below the poverty level. Children comprise the

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largest segment of the world population of 5 billion. According to depressing statistics collected by UNICEF, children are poorly treated and are frequently the victims of neglect, murder, ill-health and slavery. The Summit, which brought together the largest number of Heads of State and Government in history, committed itself to an international action to safeguard the rights of the child. They addressed such important issues as ensuring child survival, protection of children and enhancing child development.

This unique Summit is indeed a true vindication of the relentless efforts and dedication of UNICEF to mitigate the plight of children. We wish to express our deep appreciation for the remarkable support and guidance that UNICEF continues to provide to Djibouti as it attempts to implement its priority programmes of child welfare, immunization and maternal care.

Problems of structural underdevelopment, poverty, drought and famine continue to plague and frustrate the genuine aspirations of many developing countries, in particular, in Africa and Asia. Africa has the lowest life expectancy, highest infant mortality, lowest literacy and highest population growth rates in the world. These grim statistics do not bode well for a continent already in the midst of stagnation or indeed a reversal as compared to the gains made in the 1960s and 1970s.

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Africa's poor economic performance in a difficult international situation, the chronic drought, deteriorating terms of trade, weak international demand and high debt-servicing costs continue to cause grave concern. While the long-term growth prospects have economic policy implications in regard to improving human capital, mobilizing domestic savings and promoting exports, we must at the same time recognize the inherent structural problems. Some of these are insurmountable so long as external constraints - such as dwindling export earnings, lack of finance for development, and a staggering debt-servicing burden - weigh down the African economies. These constraints severely limit efforts at economic restructuring and policy reforms intended to enhance recovery and bring about sustained growth and development.

The adverse effects of the crippling external debt are boundless, with debt-servicing swallowing up over 40 per cent of Africa's export earnings. According to paragraph 59 of the "Economic Report on Africa, 1989" by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa:

> "The continuing rise in the volume of debt and the debt ratio underscores the excessive burden imposed on African economies and their vulnerability to adverse external developments. The proper understanding of the African debt crisis, therefore, requires it to be placed within the framework of the concomitant adverse developments in commodity prices and resource flows and the on-going efforts of adjustment".

Most of the initiatives designed to alleviate the debt burden unfortunately seem to share a common strategy, linking debt-relief or debt-rescheduling arrangements to medium-term adjustment programmes, with a strong element of structural reforms, which in International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank jargon "are aimed at reducing economic distortions and financial imbalances".

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More often than not such a strategy does not produce the desired results. Instead, it engenders hardship and civil turmoil.

Perhaps it is not so much a question of whether the strategy is mistaken as whether it is truly relevant to the level and pattern of development of most developing countries, in particular in Africa, where zero economic growth continues to be the rule, despite the presence of the largest number of foreign advisers per capita in the world. That undeniably lies at the heart of the problem. Otherwise, why are economic and social conditions in Africa today significantly worse than they were 15 years ago, given the substantial financial and technical assistance from the World Bank, the IMF and the developed countries?

It is high time, therefore, that the major international development agencies acknowledged the uniqueness of this group of countries, and devised a new philosophy and programme meeting the specific needs of human development on a grand scale.

Here we wish to record our deep satisfaction at the timely and generous decision taken by the French President, François Mitterrand, during the Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held recently in Paris, to cancel the entire outstanding public debt of all the least developed countries, subject to the approval of the French Parliament, and to commit France to increase its aid to that group of countries to 0.2 per cent of gross national product by the end of the decade.

In this regard, as President Mitterrand suggested, we invite the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as the other countries belonging to the Organization, to give grants to the least developed countries, instead of loans, so that the debt problem shall not continue

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ad infinitum. The provision of additional resources in the form of grants is the best way to achieve growth which will not add another twist to the debt spiral experienced by those countries.

Alarming environmental hazards are increasingly posing, or could pose, severe threats to human survival. We tend to treat environmental issues, such as degradation, resource-depletion, hazardous solid waste and pollution, as mere passing phenomena. Disasters such as desertification, destruction of tropical rain forests, drought and famine have left a lasting impact on large parts of the world, and particularly Africa. We are convinced that environmental issues cannot be separated from economic development, and this realization should provide the desired impetus for a collaborative effort co-ordinated at all levels. It was in response to this common concern that six countries in East Africa forged environmental unity by establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). Headquartered in Djibouti, IGADD is fast becoming a catalyst in the formulation of regional projects and of general policies in every member country. We express our gratitude to the many countries and organizations that continue to support IGADD and provide it with much-needed financial resources.

Despite satisfactory and substantial advances being made in various socio-economic sectors, Djibouti remains a poor country, still far from achieving many of its development goals. Unfavourable climate conditions, declining economic activities, a constant influx of refugees, and overstrained social services militate against sound and steady progress. We are confident that the international community will continue to support Djibouti's genuine development aspirations.

As we are a small country, our meagre resources have already been strained by the pressure of thousands of refugees from conflicts elsewhere in the Horn of

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Africa. The Gulf crisis has inevitably created political pressures and worsened the economic situation. Djibouti's economy depends largely on shipping activities and subregional trade. All of those activities, already experiencing a set-back, have now been severely curtailed by the current crisis. For energy Djibouti is totally dependent on oil, which is primarily imported from the Gulf.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the Republic of Djibouti has a vital interest in peace and the creation of a climate of confidence in our part of the world. For a young nation, small and lacking in essential resources, the maintenance of a reasonable degree of internal harmony and the pursuit of a realistic and prudent foreign policy go hand in hand. Our positive regional and international diplomacy will continue to be matched by pragmatic domestic policies.

Mr. WONG (Singapore): Permit me to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. With your illustrious background and wide experience in affairs of state and government, you will guide the Assembly through its agenda with the skills and sensitivities required of the job. Singapore and Malta achieved independence in the same group of new States within a year of each other. We are thus particularly proud to see Malta in the Chair. I would also like to place on record our appreciation to His Excellecy Major-General Joseph Garba for carrying out his duties as President of the General Assembly so efficiently and diligently during the last session.

We take this opportunity to welcome independent Namibia to the General Assembly as a member of the United Nations for the first time. Its presence has been long awaited and we are most happy to see Namibia finally take its seat in our midst. We also welcome our newest Member, Liechtenstein, which played an active role in many multilateral bodies even when it was not formally a Member of the Organization.

There is no doubt that the United Nations gains strength as its membership gains universality. We welcome the interest shown by the Republic of Korea in joining the United Nations. We would also welcome the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if it wishes to join. Membership for the two Koreas in the United Nations need not preclude their efforts for peaceful reunification.

Momentous changes are transforming the world. Historians have pronounced that the post-war era and the structure of world politics which it engendered collapsed in 1989. We witnessed breathtaking events in Eastern Europe as existing political orders gave way to new ones, culminating in the breach of the Berlin Wall on 9 November. Today, on 3 October, we see the two Germanys united as one.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

History will no doubt recognize and record that it was President Mikhail Gorbachev's courage and determination to initiate change in the Soviet Union and his new thinking that transformed the historical context in which we now live and act. Super-Power rivalry and the balancing of military power and blocs have been replaced by super-Power dialogue and co-operation. In many parts of the world this has meant the easing of tensions and a greater latitude in relationships.

The cold war is over. But it is not the end of history. History will go on and it will not be boring. If we are not careful, it might even be devastating. The end of the ideological cold war only reveals the vast dimensions of the problems still confronting us.

Notwithstanding the auspicious climate between the East and the West, the problems of the threats to international peace and security and the maintenance of peace and security are as pressing and as relevant as ever. Not since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 have we been faced with an international crisis of such grave proportions. In August, we were on the verge of a military catastrophe. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, said recently in Bogota, on 23 August, the third world countries "continue to experience alarming insecurity, of which we are now seeing dreadful evidence".

With hindsight we can see that the euphoria ushered in by the end of the cold war could not have lasted. Even as we witnessed the peaceful political changes in Europe and a successful transition to independence in Namibia we were made acutely aware of the elusiveness of global peace. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan did not hasten the achievement of a political settlement and the fighting and killing persisted. The situation in Lebanon continued to worsen and the peace process on the question of Palestine moved at a glacial pace.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Thus we learned that détente between the super-Powers need not automatically mean a more congenial environment globally. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a grim reminder of the problem of security for smaller States in a Hobbesian world. In a matter of hours, the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait was complete.

At the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly my delegation drew attention to the paradox of peace for the weaker and smaller nations. If the structure of world politics has changed irrevocably with the breathtaking eradication of the deep ideological divide, a new order is waiting to be constructed. There are undoubtedly many new players that can affect the restructuring of the international order. There is little doubt that the retreat of the super-Powers from their global role creates an opening wedge for the development of regional ambitions and encourages new aspirants to regional hegemony. This was what Iraq set out to do by force. This is what the international community must seek strenuously to prevent.

The Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait is absolutely unacceptable because it was unprovoked. It was an act of blatant aggression. It was against the principles and the Charter of the United Nations. Kuwait has been a peace-loving and law-abiding member of the international community. Furthermore, it enjoyed good relations with its neighbour, Iraq. Yet on 2 August thousands of Iraqi troops backed by tanks and helicopters overran Kuwait City, taking the capital. The Security Council reacted swiftly and decisively and it voted unanimously to condemn the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait. It reacted correctly when it expressed its determination not to recognize any régime set up by the occupying Power.

This was what the United Nations was created for - to maintain international peace and security and to take collective measures to prevent and remove threats to

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the peace and to suppress acts of aggression. For the first time in the history of the United Nations the Security Council imposed comprehensive sanctions backed by a naval and air blockade to put pressure on Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait and to restore sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity to the country. In the new post-cold-war era the United Nations rose to meet the threat and the challenge. There is no other way. The United Nations must stand united in its resolve to get Iraq out of Kuwait. Iraq must see that the whole world is against its actions, and not just a few countries.*

The international community must not shrink from its duty to take concerted action against aggressors who violate international law and principles. Otherwise, nations would exist in a state of permanent insecurity. It is also a fact that third world nations depend to an extraordinary degree on international bodies for the preservation of security. There should be more effective ways to prevent aggression. We should not wait till the belligerent strikes.

Singapore views the annexation of Kuwait most gravely. This is especially so as one historic epoch is closing and another is unfolding. For about 40 years we established an international order where the rules of the game were understood. The super-Powers played a role in upholding that order. Today, in the fluid international situation, new players are testing the system. We must not lose the opportunity to insist now that the new international order should be one which demands the strictest adherence to the norms and the principles of international law backed by an effective system of common and collective security.

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* Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

If history since the Second World War has taught us anything, we should have come to the recognition that military power cannot be used to achieve political objectives and that aggression does not pay. It is the task of the United Nations to underscore this message with the weight of its collective will to deter future aggressors.

In South-East Asia the United Nations played a crucial role in an analogous problem of peace and security. After more than a decade of war it is now possible to envisage realistically an end to the long tragedy of Cambodia.

On 10 September 1990 a major breakthrough was achieved in Jakarta, when all the Cambodian parties agreed to accept, in its entirety, the framework for a comprehensive political settlement based on an enhanced United Nations role in Cambodia that was worked out by the five permanent members of the Security Council during the course of this year. In Jakarta, the Cambodians also formed a Supreme National Council which now occupies Cambodia's seat in this Assembly. This is the first critical stage towards a more far-reaching national reconciliation.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Many years of patient work by countries in and outside the region contributed to this success. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has played a leading role on Cambodia from the very beginning. An International Conference on Kampuchea was held at the United Nations in 1981 under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of Austria. The Ad Hoc Committee of that Conference, led by Senegal, has played a useful role. Indonesia took the initiative to organize a series of informal meetings in Jakarta. France and Indonesia convened an International Conference on Cambodia in Paris last August which established the basic framework for the negotiating process.

The Permanent Five must be commended for having had the vision and the courage to seize the historic opportunity afforded by the profound international realignments that have occurred, to work together to shape the framework of a settlement. The recent adoption of Council resolution 668 (1990) by a unanimous vote of the Council is a watershed in the Cambodian peace process.

But in the most basic and important sense, a political settlement in Cambodia will be the achievement of the international community as a whole; a success for all States, big and small, in and outside the region. It is only because the international community, expressing its will in successive sessions of the General Assembly during the last decade, refused to compromise on basic principles of international law that it is possible to look forward to the restoration of Cambodian independence and peace throughout South-East Asia. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have steadfastly supported ASEAN for more than a decade. It was their faith in the United Nations and in international law that made the achievements of Jakarta, Paris and the Permanent Five possible.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

The Permanent Five framework accepted by the Cambodians in Jakarta is not a perfect document. We are dealing with political realities that are far from perfect. There are still many challenges ahead. But it is the best hope for the majority of ordinary Cambodians who have no interest in the machinations and rivalries of their leaders and their patrons and whose only desire is peace. For these many ordinary Cambodians, the United Nations offers their only hope for a better life for themselves and their children. We must not falter or fail them. If much has been achieved, much more needs to be done. Peace in Cambodia will require an enhanced role for the United Nations that is without precedent. The framework accepted by the Cambodian parties needs to be fleshed out and elaborated in many details.

There should be no illusions that this will be an easy task. But the foundations have been laid. I am confident that if the major Powers and the regional Powers continue to co-operate, and the Cambodians themselves build upon the opportunity now before them, it is a task that is well within our grasp. The urgent need now is to maintain the momentum and press ahead, setting aside old animosities, working only for the good of all Cambodians, without being distracted by recriminations or irrelevant rivalries. We hope that all parties will co-operate fully in the process of elaborating the framework, without raising new issues or reviving questions that have been overtaken by events. Attempts to alter the Permanent Five framework will only prolong conflict. We look forward to the early reconvening of the Paris International Conference on Cambodia, where a final comprehensive political settlement can be signed.

When this occurs it will turn the page on an unhappy period in the history of Cambodia, Indo-China and South-East Asia. It will signal the beginning of a new chapter in which the animosities of the past can be set aside in favour of

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

co-operation for mutual benefit. The peoples of Indo-China have suffered deprivation for too long. They deserve better. A Cambodia at peace with itself and with its neighbours; and a vibrant and dynamic Viet Nam, at peace with the region and sharing fully in the prosperity of the rest of South-East Asia, is in the interests of all the ASEAN countries, and indeed of the world. This will be a triumph for the international community and for the United Nations.

All this leads us to conclude that the United Nation is poised to play an increasingly significant role, to foster and uphold a new international order: an international order which is peaceful; an international order which is just; an international order which is equal; an international order which will not tolerate larger States devouring smaller States; and an international order in which gross imbalances between nations will be reduced.

My delegation is pleased that co-operation between the great Powers has facilitated the work of the United Nations, allowing it to respond in a crisis with requisite speed. But we would be concerned if great-Power unanimity translated into a great-Power directorate which would in effect shape the new international order without the necessary checks and balances. If we are to leave behind the old international order to reach out for a new order in a new era, where domination and aggression are phenomena of the past, then the voices of the many, the voices of the North and the South, the great and the small, should be heard and heeded. The United Nations, which is a microcosm of the macrocosm, is a useful forum through which the great Powers must consult the rest of the world to forge a consensus on peace and development.

The United Nations in the new era will be stretched to perform additional functions as its potential is now fully appreciated by all. Some of those

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functions will be new; they will be innovative activities demanded by a rapidly changing world that is impatient to enjoy the promise of economic modernization and political change. There will be catalytic actions demanded for tackling the problems of the global environment, debt, terrorism, drugs and AIDS. The United Nations is best placed to co-ordinate the efforts and provide the mechanisms necessary to tackle urgent environmental issues, which are complex, multifaceted and related to issues of development. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will require follow-up action to achieve the targets of the twenty-first-century agenda. The United Nations will thus surely grow. Other functions will be those that were envisaged under the Charter by the founding fathers but were never implemented because ideological differences and mistrust got in the way.

Certainly the time has come in the interests of international peace for the United Nations to sharpen its ability to deter or counter aggression by one State against another. The monitoring and decision-making mechanisms of the United Nations, as well as the machinery of collective defence, should be increasingly geared towards a policy of "prevention is better than cure".

The United Nations has now come full circle. There was a time when its detractors were abundant and its prestige was low. Today, after a string of successes with the Iran-Iraq war, Afghanistan, Namibia and Cambodia, we have new faith in the institution. But the effectiveness of the United Nations cannot be based simply on respect and faith or even on political support. In the end the potential of the United Nations will be determined by the financial solvency of the institution. If we are to help the United Nations realize its potential it is important that all its Members should pay their assessed contributions in full.

(Mr. Wong, Singapore)

Just as it is important to uphold the Charter in matters of international law and principles, so it is equally important to abide by its rules on financial arrangements.

The United Nations may never fulfil the Utopian dream of its founders, but it can make new beginnings in the 1990s, if all of us want that to happen.

Prince Mohamed BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): I should like to join other representatives in presenting my warm congratulations to Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta on his unanimous election as President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I wish also to express our appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Joseph N. Garba, and to the Secretary-General for providing us with leadership which has inspired confidence throughout the past year.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

At the same time Brunei Darussalam welcomes as Members of this Organization the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Repulic of Namibia.

Today is a special day for the world community. Brunei Darussalam would therefore like to take this early opportunity to extend its heartfelt congratulations to the German people on the momentous occasion of the unification of their homeland. We similarly congratulate the Republic of Yemen and the Yemeni people on their peaceful unification earlier this year. These events are the high points of a year in which a number of encouraging prospects have seemed to indicate that the political situation in the world is improving.

At this Assembly last year we noted several of these positive signs. Since then we have seen relations between the super-Powers become much less tense. This, in turn, has led to a number of constructive meetings between previously hostile parties. At these meetings the broad principle of negotiation rather than confrontation has appeared to dominate. To this extent détente has been seen in action.

As a result we have observed several pleasing initiatives.

In our own region, we commend the continuing efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the other countries that are seeking a solution to the Cambodian problem. The level of accord reached thus far by the Cambodian parties over the framework document has been encouraging. Final agreement will be a considerable achievement, and we urge all concerned to bring this about.

In the Korean peninsula, we have witnessed signs of reconciliation between two adversaries. This could lay the foundation for lasting peace between North and South. Following this, we hope that the application of either or both of them for membership of the United Nations will receive favourable consideration.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

We have noted moves towards the resolution of the Afghan conflict. These may encourage the Afghans to settle their disputes and start rebuilding their homeland.

Finally, the independence of Namibia was an occasion of great joy to us all. It came about as the result of much hard work by the United Nations, and showed that this Organization can be a powerful, active force for peace.

These are positive examples of progress. They serve to convince us that the trend towards reconciliation and co-operation between the major Powers can assist us all. Above all, such progress can help to bring about control over the flow of arms, a reduction in the excessive level of weaponry, and regulation of the transfer of arms technology. It may thus permit us to look forward realistically to a time when the arms race has been halted throughout the world. Nevertheless, at present, there appears to be only moral force to protect us against violations of the United Nations Charter. Therefore our hopes for the future are linked to the belief that it is crucial that the role of the United Nations in the resolution of international disputes be enhanced.

In that way, Brunei Darussalam believes, members of the international community can contribute to a détente that is world-wide by encouraging regional organizations to co-operate with one another in support of the principles and Charter of the United Nations. Regional organizations may thus begin to emerge as significant forces for the protection of global peace and security. It is by engaging in such new roles that the major Powers may place their own hard-won détente at the service of world-wide peace.

It is important, however, to recognize that détente is not to be judged solely from the perspective of Europe. Peace and stability is the concern of all regions.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

Therefore, while acknowledging a number of positive moves towards the creation of a safer world, we detect grave tendencies that threaten world-wide peace.

In particular, we observe contradictory trends. These reveal that traditional security, which in European countries may have begun to assume a less dominant character, is still a matter of considerable concern to the rest of the world. At a time when developed nations are more free to concentrate on welfare and even more development we face the disturbing fact that less developed countries are engaged in an arms race of their own.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a demonstration of how vulnerable small nations can be in the face of such contradiction. It also reminds us how fragile the newly emerging global order is. Thus, in urging the international community to reject and condemn such acts, and in expressing its own condemnation of all such violations of the United Nations Charter, Brunei Darussalam not only notes current events but also recognizes their deep-seated causes.

Hence, we draw the attention of the Members of this Organization once more to specific regional matters. These, we believe, are often the deep-seated cause of wider conflict.

In this respect, we refer to the core problem of Palestine. Brunei Darussalam reiterates its total condemnation of Israeli policy in that country with regard both to the actions of the Israeli army and to policy relating to the immigration of Soviet Jews. We therefore wish to record again our support for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East, involving the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

We refer also to the war in Lebanon, to which we must continue to seek an end. We urge all parties to continue to work towards peace within the framework of the Taif Agreement.*

We refer to South Africa, where the complete and irreversible dismantling of apartheid has yet to be brought about.

We refer similarly to matters of great global importance, such as damage to the environment, the problem of debt, international drug-trafficking and underdevelopment. These are no less threatening to peace than are acts of open hostility. Although initiatives taken in these areas have afforded us cautious optimism, other problems remain unsolved and must be addressed with even greater urgency. Only when that is done can we hope to see the emergence of a world that all nations, regardless of their size, geographic location or level of economic development, regard as prosperous and stable.

Today I have stressed that an era of peace, stability and prosperity cannot be fashioned solely from the viewpoint of one region of the world, no matter how powerful that region may be. This means that we cannot be complacent. The global peace and stability that we all seek is certainly promoted by the climate of East-West détente that has developed during the past year. However, it will not emerge for the benefit of all unless we strive together to prevent new problems and to solve the many long-standing ones that have been shown to threaten the very existence of many nations and their people.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. EL-TALHY (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Before I begin my statement, allow me to read the following message, which the leader of the revolution, President Qaddafi, has asked me to convey to the General Assembly. The text will be distributed shortly.

"The world is witnessing today the collapse of the post-world war arrangements, which included the division of Germany and Europe, military alliances, the division of the world into East and West. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany marked the beginning of the collapse of those arrangements which were basically an act of revenge against the Nazi movement, which had plunged the world into that horrific conflict. The crumbling of those arrangements was followed by the end of the traditional conflict between East and West and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, which will lead to the collapse of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

"However, the whole world has ignored, deliberately or not, the dangerous nature of a mine which was part and parcel of those post-war arrangements. It is a mine that threatens world peace. It is the Jewish State in Palestine.

"The establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine was also an act of revenge against nazism which had persecuted the Jews in Europe. It was a reaction brought about by the actions of nazism. However, nazism is now a thing of the past. So, why should an innocent people, the Palestinian people, who had no hand in this, pay the penalty?

"The establishment of a State on a religious basis has no acceptable justification. To accept this is to accept the division of the world on a religious basis. That is to say that all the adherents of any one religion have the right to set up a State of their own on any piece of land they choose to make their home. Obviously, the outcome, for the world, would be an unending maelstrom of conflict.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

"If, in yesteryears the world sympathized with the Jews and condemned their persecutors, the world must not forget it was Europe that persecuted the Jews. It is Europe that should pay the price. The state of the Jews should be on European soil. We have proposed on several occasions that if there must be a Jewish State, it should be in those areas which we have suggested previously.

"The problem of Palestine is one of the most dangerous problems that pose a threat to international peace. It is the root cause of a perpetual ongoing conflict between East and West, Islam and Christianity and the North and the South. It is the direct cause of what is called terrorism, the taking of hostages and other acts of violence.

"One wonders why, when the world has succeeded in dealing with the many other crises which posed a threat to the peace of the North, should the world leave the peace of the South at the mercy of the mine of a Jewish State in Palestine? A world that is really serious about peace on earth must realize that the religious character of the Jewish State in Palestine should come to an end. In order to bring that about, all the nations of the world should withdraw their recognition of that State and establish a democratic State of Palestine that would be a home for all its inhabitants, regardless of their religion.

"Our advice to the whole world is that if the world really wants peace, it should redress this injustice, just exactly as any other wrong which stemmed from the post-war arrangements has been redressed. Otherwise, present and future generations will pay dearly in violence, terrorism and hate, and the whole world will face the threat of war because of this dangerous mine that has been planted in Palestine."

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Having read the message of the leader of the revolution to the Assembly, I come back to my statement.

At the outset, I should like to extend to you, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. This gives me special pleasure in that you belong to a country with which my own maintains relations of good-neighbourliness, co-operation and friendship, and in that both countries have long-standing historical ties. I have every confidence that your experience and diplomatic competence will provide the General Assembly with the wise leadership it so greatly needs in light of the crisis through which we are living.

I should like, too, to express our esteem and gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba, President of the forty-fourth session, for the great efficiency and superb capabilities he showed in handling the work of that session.

I should not fail to express our high esteem and respect for Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his persistent and sincere efforts to foster the ideals of the United Nations, and for the prominent role he and his colleagues in the Secretariat have played to further the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization.

We are really gratified and proud in these bleak times that our brethren in southern and northern Yemen have been able, by virtue of their faith and determination, to make the dream of the Yemeni Arab people come true by uniting the Yemeni State after a long period of separation. This development has made us really happy, and our happiness will be even greater when the Arabs will be represented in this forum as a single Arab State, and not as a divided Arab group.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Permit me, too, to welcome the delegation of the independent State of Namibia, which has taken its rightful place as a Member of the Organization. We in Libya are very pleased that our friends in Namibia have been able to achieve independence after a bitter struggle against imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. Namibia's independence has demonstrated that the people's will for liberation, independence and self-determination cannot be vanquished.

I should not fail either to welcome the admission of Liechtenstein to membership of the Organization, for this will contribute to strengthening the United Nations and promote its objectives.

I salute, too, the historic unification of the German people. We are sure that their united State will be an active factor of stability, equilibrium and advancement in our world.

(Mr. El-Taihy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

As a matter of fact, this tendency towards the unification of divided peoples, a phenomenon that began to take root after our last session, should be highlighted, respected and encouraged. I use the word "divided" advisedly, because division was imposed on those peoples for reasons I need not recall or dwell upon. The unification of the Yemeni Arab people and the German people - unimaginable for many of us less than a year ago - shows that one of the tendencies which will characterize the next few decades has already emerged and taken root. It is a tendency that will be crucial for the formulation of future international relations. It stems from the aspiration after unity by many a divided people. The Arab people is one of those peoples which were divided in order for them to be easy prey for aggression and dependence. How I wish I could be proven wrong in this respect. However, I have a strong feeling that is akin to conviction that some of the influential Powers in today's world have taken it upon themselves to perpetuate and further the division of the Arab world into mini-States and small entities that remain easy targets of aggression in order to satisfy their greed and protect their own interests. That is a near certainty.

The Holy Koran tells us:

"And hold fast,
All together, by the rope
Which God (stretches out
For you), and be not divided
Among yourselves;
And remember with gratitude
God's favour on you;
For ye were enemies

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

And He joined your hearts

In love, so that by His Grace

Ye became brethren;

And ye were on the brink

Of the Pit of Fire,

And He saved you from it.

Thus doth God make

His Signs clear to you:

That ye may be guided". (The Holy Koran, III:103)

"And verily this Brotherhood

Of yours is a single Brotherhood,

And I am your Lord

And Cherisher: therefore

Fear Me (and no other)". (The Holy Koran, XXIII:52)

"Be not like those

Who are divided

Amongst themselves

And fall into disputations

After receiving

Clear Signs:

For them

Is a dreadful Penalty". (The Holy Koran, III:105)

To us, therefore, unity is a religious duty and a moral principle. This takes precedence over its being a security, economic or political necessity. Accordingly, the great Powers which believe in fostering Arab disunity and division

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

must realize that by doing that they commit an act of aggression against the very basis of our belief and principles of morality.

I found it necessary to extol this orientation towards unity, in the sincere hope that others may review their policies and plans and come to realize that stability, peace and progress in the world require respect for the legitimate aspirations of all peoples.

For years, we have been at a crucial juncture that undoubtedly marks the beginning of a new era in international relations. Détente has been achieved and has now developed into entente. It is now universally acknowledged that all of us face serious challenges. No longer can any of us say "after me the flood". The cold war has ended, and many of the assumptions created by the Second World War have been abandoned. Great technological progress has been achieved. If used altruistically without a priori judgments, it could open new vistas for humanity and lead mankind to a safe future.

This is only one face of the coin, however. It does have another face which completely contradicts the first. Entente among the rich and powerful has been confined to the northern hemisphere. The South still faces many crises, some of which have been aggravated and turned into imminent threats to peace, security and stability.

Palestine and South Africa exemplify the long suffering of oppressed peoples who have been displaced, oppressed, exploited and subjected to the worst kinds of injustice: the appropriation of land, apartheid and attempts at genocide. But still, the hearts and minds of many have been deaf to the call of right, justice and morality.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The tragic economic and social plight of many of the peoples of the third world who continue to be victims of hunger and disease is clear enough, as is the continuous deterioration of their resources and capabilities. On the other hand, the drive to dominate, impose hegemony, exploit and intervene in the internal affairs of others continues to be a pattern of behaviour that some seek to justify. The legitimate aspiration of many nations after unity, progress and peace continue to be ignored. All these are but examples.

That is why we in Libya, much as we welcome entente between the rich and powerful, believe that such entence will not last unless it encompasses the whole world. This, in turn, will not be achieved unless injustice is redressed and the approaches and policies adopted by many are reviewed and realigned to proper values and moral principles.

Allah, the Almighty, said in the Holy Koran,

"Generations before you
We destroyed when they
Did wrong". (The Holy Koran, X:13)

Unfortunately, the past few weeks have witnessed the development of a serious crisis which greatly concerns my country. I refer to the Gulf crisis which has arisen, unfortunately, between two neighbourly and brotherly Arab countries. It came about in spite of the special relationship among Arab countries and because of the fact that the present Arab political entities and borders are a product of an era of the Arab weakness which was of the making of the colonial Powers that colonized and divided the Arab world. Hence, those entities do not necessarily reflect Arab aspirations or Arab interests. Regardless of this, no one, my country included, can condone the course of invasion, occupation and annexation.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

My country's position has been clear. We condemned the invasion on the first day and demanded the immediate withdrawal of forces; we stressed that Kuwaiti internal affairs are a matter for the Kuwaiti people alone and that no one had the right to decide for them. Within the framework of the League of Arab States, or bilaterally, the Arabs moved to contain and deal with the crisis.

I am sorry to say that Arab efforts were hampered by the few who moved to seize this opportunity to achieve long-cherished goals in the region. They did not act to defend Kuwait, but to tighten their grip over the region's oil fields. They saw in the crisis a golden opportunity that had to be grabbed and exploited. We have seen how reactions followed the actions of those few at a heightened pace. They sent their troops to the region and imposed an embargo against Iraq even before the Security Council could take action, and exerted all manner of pressure and blackmail against various countries to make those countries acquiesce and support them. We only wish that all of this was done with the purpose of maintaining peace and upholding justice and international legitimacy.

Only a few weeks before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the very super-Power that was quick to deploy its forces, impose an embargo and threaten to wage war, had refused to approve the sending of an envoy on a Security Council fact-finding mission to the territories occupied by the Zionists to investigate the systematic policy of murder, deportation and destruction that Israel pursues there. This chameleon-like behaviour throws one off balance.

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It is regrettable that some countries behave as if legitimacy is to be respected only when it can be pressed into the service of their greed, their interests and their policies. We fear, and all the nations of the third world would be well advised to fear, that this outlook may become entrenched as a result of the changes that have been taking place in our world over the past few years. Those changes, it would seem, have led some to feel that they have come out as the only super-Power in the post-cold war world.

From the very beginning of the Gulf crisis, my country insisted that it be resolved within an Arab framework and made intensive efforts to find an Arab solution that would prevent foreign intervention because we are aware of its nature and objectives.

My country rejected the foreign presence in the region, called for respecting international legitimacy and called upon the Security Council to perform its duties under the Charter. My country does not concede to any country the right to appropriate for itself any of the Security Council's duties or validities.

Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, our leader, proposed an initiative to solve the Gulf crisis on the occasion of the Twenty-first Anniversary of the Great September First Revolution. We hope that concerted efforts will be made to support the search for a peaceful solution that would spare the world the catastrophe of military confrontation in the region.

It is in this that we face the first test of our credibility and our ability to achieve genuine international détente. Our true will should be manifested in the changes we would collectively bring about with a view to improving the United Nations. The United Nations should have the central role in developing the new framework of international relations. We have to be careful not to let the United

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Nations become an obedient tool in the hands of any one State or a group of States that would carry the United Nations along in whichever way they wish.

The role of the United Nations still suffers from several shortcomings. We have to take practical, daring steps, in solidarity with each other, to redress the imbalances that have weakened the Organization. The first step must be a review of the Charter with the purpose of bringing its provisions into step with the profound historical changes we are now witnessing and hope to witness in the future. Some of the provisions of the Charter have become outdated and out of step with international realities. We refer in particular to the prerogative of veto in the Security Council, which has been and continues to be a major hurdle that obstructs the most important role for which the Organization was founded, namely, the maintenance of world peace and security. It is no longer logical to retain this prerogative, which some have used to foster aggression, occupation and invasion.

My country attaches special importance to strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. It is regrettable that that region continues to be one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension in the world. In this connection, we should like to endorse the final communiqué of the Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Littoral Countries of the Mediterranean, held in Algeria on 25 and 26 June 1990.

The main threat to peace and obstruction to co-operation and stability in the region is the Zionist entity. That entity, having opted for the threat of force, overt aggression, usurpation of land and genocide as a way of life, has transformed itself into an arsenal of every type of weapon of mass destruction. Through its strategic alliance with certain Powers, it has been given the material and technical means which have enabled it to put spy satellites in space and test long-range missiles - one of which, as may be remembered, landed off the coast of

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the city of Benghazi in 1989 - let alone the development of its nuclear capabilities and other weapons of mass destruction.

Despite international entente, many areas of the world still witness an escalation of tension and instability. As a case in point, the Palestine question, in particular, and the Arab-Zionist conflict, in general, have been made to develop in an opposite direction to the general tendency towards détente. This has redoubled the possibilities of a major conflagration.

This grave development stems from the conduct of the Zionist entity and the attitude of the Powers which support that conduct.

All the resolutions adopted by this forum have elicited nothing but neglect and rejection from the Zionist entity. Undeterred, it goes ahead with the implementation of the racist Zionist movement's scheme of Greater Israel. It stops at nothing in the drive to exterminate the Palestinian people, the rightful owners of the land. It kills, banishes, demolishes houses and deprives the Palestinians of education and the means of livelihood. Today, the Zionist's aim is even clearer than at any other time. They have no qualms about articulating their intention to compel the remnants of the Palestinians to leave their land so that Jews from all over the world may be brought in to replace them as settlers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories. Thus they establish the racist Jewish State.

It is painful to find some people who regard all this as an issue of human rights. How unfair to human rights! Is there any provision in the instruments of human rights that stipulates the uprooting of people from their land and their country so that other people may be implanted in their place under the pretext that those who are implanted had suffered oppression at the hands of others? Which is the oppressed party here? Is it the person who was born, as were his parents and ancestors, on the land from which he is expelled, or is it the newcomer who has

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never seen it, nor had his ancestors? By what logic or reason can we accept that the immigration of Jews to Palestine and the uprooting of that country's people is a question of human rights? The massive influx of Jewish immigrants and their settlment in Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories will have horrendous consequences for peace in the region. It is also a flagrant violation of the norms of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international instruments.

The very least that we should do is to expel the racist entity from this Organization, whose resolutions the entity rejects. The sanctions mandated by the Charter should be imposed upon that entity. Why have they not been imposed in this case? Historical precedents show that such sanctions have been instrumental in redressing wrongs and implementing the principles of the Charter, as in the case of Rhodesia and South Africa.

While we welcome the resolution of a number of regional problems and questions under international détente, we would like to draw attention to the continued suffering of the Lebanese people which is one of the consequences of the Zionist aggression against Palestine. Also, the question of Cyprus has not been solved and controversy is still rampant among the parties concerned with the Afghan question. We reiterate our firm positions of principle which we have previously declared from this rostrum concerning those questions. We hope that international détente will create favourable conditions for their just resolution.

My country expresses its regret at the failure of the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in Geneva recently.

While we support the international endeavours to rid the world of the weapons of mass destruction, we stress that those endeavours will succeed only if earnest

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efforts are made to resolve conflicts and defuse tensions at the international level on the basis of universal disarmament and eradication of all weapons of mass destruction. This cannot be done selectively by focusing on one type or category of those weapons. Such measures should be taken in an equitable and balanced manner that would ensure the rights of all States to security and development in conformity with the priorities set out in the concluding document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, which gave the highest priority to nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. El-Talhy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

If international relations have improved and détente has been followed by entente, the world in which we live and which has become one village, even one home still suffers a disparity that is no longer acceptable: a small minority still enjoys material abundance, lives in luxury amidst all the products of advanced technology, while the great majority continues to live in hunger and disease and lacks the basic means of subsistence.

Positive developments in international political relations have given us an historic opportunity to remedy the imbalances in international economic relations and establish a new economic order.

In conclusion, I believe that the decade of the 1990s will shape the world of the twenty-first century and that it gives us the opportunity to correct our mistakes and put our best foot foward with renewed determination to leave such mistakes behind and lay sound and solid foundations for a world that would be free from injustice - a world where justice and equality prevail and in which we can live together.

Mr. AL-NUAIMI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you our sincerest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are fully confident that you will conduct the affairs of this session with the statesmanship and competence that are required for the realization of the desired results. The wise policies of your country and the constructive role that it plays, reinforce our confidence in your abilities. It also gives me great pleasure to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Garba for his very able stewardship of the previous session.*

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* Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

On this occasion, I should also like to express my Government's appreciation for the leadership and constructive efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in order to enhance the role of the Organization. Thanks to his tireless efforts, the United Nations has become an effective centre for agreement and decisions and a barrier against chaos in international relations.

Since last year's session, two new States - Namibia and Liechtenstein - have become Members of the United Nations. We welcome these two new Member States and assure them of our co-operation in order to promote the noble purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We are also happy to welcome the unification of the two Germanys, as we believe this to be a new stabilizing factor in world politics.

People all over the world - east and west, north and south - warmly welcomed the emergence of a new world of co-operation, a world in which the fear of confrontation between the two super-Powers started to disappear with the ending of the cold war that characterized international order since the end of the Second World War.

We, like all other States and peoples, welcomed with a great deal of optimism and hope the new spirit that pervaded international relations. The great relaxation in the relations between the two super-Powers, together with the momentous changes in Eastern Europe and the advances made in the settlement of regional conflicts, were all indications that we are on the threshold of a new world. It was the world originally conceived by the authors of the Charter - a world in which dialogue, peaceful settlement and respect for international law would reign supreme, and would become the principle that governs relations among nations and communities. That would be a world of mutual respect and co-operation in our striving for prosperity in which creativity, progress and stability would become the arenas of competition.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

On the Arab level, these developments had a positive impact on inter-Arab relations. A new spirit began to pervade those relations. The new climate of hope and optimism went hand in hand with efforts to formulate a new strategy of joint Arab action based on understanding, solidarity and commitment to brotherly Arab ties and Arab covenants. In pursuit of this goal, several Arab meetings were held. Other steps were taken within the framework of the Arab League in order to make preparations for holding an Arab summit conference whose purpose was to outline, for the first time, the future to which the Arab people aspire, a future where peace and prosperity prevail. One of the first fruits of the new spirit in the Arab world was the unity of the two Yemens which we joyfully welcomed.

Unfortunately, our optimism was short-lived because, suddenly, the world found itself returning to the pre-United Nations era. There emerged someone who tried to obliterate 45 years of unstinting human effort to build stability and uphold the right of States and peoples to live in peace. There emerged someone who also tried to reverse all the endeavours that have been undertaken to build a brighter Arab future, and undermine the very foundations of Arab solidarity.

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi forces invaded the State of Kuwait. The small and peaceful member of the international community then became a victim of brutal usurpation and occupation whose identity Iraq has tried to obliterate through annexation and systematic destruction of its institutions and infrastructures.

No one expected 1990 to be the year of Arab crisis. However, it has brought with it a crisis of complex origins, far-reaching effects and devastating proportions. Above all, nobody expected one Arab State to inflict such atrocious injustice on a sister Arab State which in the past had fought side by side with it and defended its rights.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Iraq's aggression against Kuwait is, above all else, a violation of the Arab code of ethics and values. It is also a breach of Arab and international principles and treaties. Irrespective of the outcome of this aggression, the Arabs will be the ultimate losers.

As a responsible Arab State, the United Arab Emirates tried, with its sisterly Arab States and through the Arab League, to rectify this grave abnormality in an effort to prevent the exacerbation of the situation. However, Iraq's persistence in its aggression frustrated all collective and bilateral Arab efforts.

In this regard, our delegation would like to voice its conviction that the resolutions adopted by the emergency meeting of the Arab League, along with those endorsed by the emergency Arab Summit of 10 August, especially resolution 195, reflect our commitment to Arab treaties and principles, and to the letter and spirit of the Arab League Charter. All those resolutions call for the restoration of legitimate rights to their original owners, and reversing the injustice and aggression that were inflicted upon a sovereign member State.

A lot has been said in certain Arab and some international circles with regard to the presence of foreign troops in the region. It is important, therefore, that we clarify this matter.

Everybody knows that my country has amicable relations with all States of the world. As a small State, we always avoided military entanglements and alliances. We also refused to grant military facilities to foreign countries on our soil. We were relying, for our national security, on all the Arab and international treaties and on the protective shield of good neighborliness. However, having been exposed to direct threats from Iraq, as was demonstrated in the memorandum of the Iraqi Foreign Minister to the Arab League on 15 July 1990, and the statements of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein and his senior officials, in which they considered

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the Emirates to be a second target after Kuwait, our country had no option, by virtue of its limited defence capabilities, but to seek the assistance of sisterly and friendly countries. In doing that, we acted in self-defence in exercise of the right to sovereignty and collective security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I should like, however, to emphasize here that the presence of these troops is temporary and is only linked to the present crisis, which we hope will be resolved as soon as possible.

Differences between States, regardless of their causes, do not justify aggression, and should be resolved by the peaceful means specified by the Charter of the United Nations. The aggression against Kuwait is a dangerous precedent in international relations and should be confronted decisively; otherwise, the security and existence of small States will become threatened. The arguments used by Iraq to justify its aggression against Kuwait are legally, historically and morally invalid. The firm stand taken by the world community, as embodied in the successive resolutions of the Security Council, reflects the anger of the world at Iraq's aggression.

Right from the start, our country supported the resolutions of the Security Council. Once more, we demand that Iraq withdraw completely and unconditionally from the Kuwaiti territory, that the legitimate Government should be restored and that its sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected. We also demand that Iraq release all civilian hostages. All other differences should be resolved afterwards through negotiations in a manner that safeguards the legitimate rights of the State of Kuwait.

From this rostrum, we appeal to all the States of the world to act resolutely and expeditiously to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, in order to save Iraq, and its people, as well the entire region, from a disaster of immeasurable magnitude

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and consequences. We should like to reaffirm once again our full solidarity with the Government and people of the sister State of Kuwait in their struggle to recover their full national sovereignty.

One of the fundamental facts that cannot be overlooked in all this, is that Iraq would not have dared to commit such aggression had there not been an unfortunate history of conflict in the Middle East. A significant aspect of this background has been the failure of the international community to deter aggression and repel forces of occupation. This is especially true of the failure to implement Security Council and General Assembly resolutions with regard to the major conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the Palestinian question. The acts of aggression, occupation, annexation and expulsion perpetrateed by Israel against the Palestinian people and against the Arab front-line States have paved the way for the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. The stalemated situation in the Middle East, together with the failure to reach a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian question and guarantee the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, gave Iraq the impression that aggression, occupation and annexation are commonplace in the region and that, consequently, the world would overlook and condone them. Iraq also believed that it could do what Israel has always done by force of arms and thus face the world with a fait accompli.

Iraq has tried to exploit the prevalent Arab sentiments towards the just Palestinian question to establish a link between that just cause and its unjust occupation of Kuwait. While my country condemns all acts of aggression and occupation, it sees no link between these two different cases. Regardless of the harm that the Iraqi aggression has caused to the Palestian question and to other pan-Arab causes, our delegation firmly believes that the international community, which has exhibited unity and exercised authority in a decisive manner against the

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Iraqi aggression, is duty-bound to exercise the same authority against all acts of aggression, especially Israel's aggression against and occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands. The objective is to achieve a just and durable peace and settle the Palestine question in such a way as to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is their right to establish an independent State on their national soil in Palestine.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

Lebanon is another outstanding Middle East problem. Such problems partly stem from the Israeli policies of expansion and occupation. Through the Tripartite Committee, Arab efforts have almost succeeded in bringing about a final settlement to Lebanon's problems and conflicts. To bring those efforts to fruition, a united stand on the part of the international community is required to assist Lebanon and end its ordeal. Our delegation commends the progress achieved by the Tripartite Committee in its endeavours to bring about national reconciliation. We appeal to all the Lebanese parties to work diligently towards the settlement of their differences and the resolution of their problems by peaceful and democratic means, in keeping with Lebanese tradition. We also appeal to the international community to work towards ending Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon so that Lebanon may recover and exercise its authority over its national soil.

Despite the agonies of our region, we must put on record here the positive developments which have taken place in many other regional problems. We are happy to see the Namibian question resolved, with Namibia regaining its sovereignty and independence after many years of struggle. We would like to express here our appreciation for the leading role of the United Nations and its agencies and mechanisms in the issue to this positive and democratic conclusion.

We are aware of the impact of the settlement of the Namibian question on the situation in South Africa, including the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and the dawning of a new era in that country. However, we believe that we have a long way to go and that much more must be done to dismantle the system of apartheid. Despite some positive signs and the political efforts undertaken by all parties, we shall not relax until we see all repressive and racist laws completely eliminated and the majority given its full political and economic rights. We therefore hope

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

that the international community will keep up its pressure until racism is uprooted and completely eradicated.

With regard to Central America, our Government welcomes the fruitful results produced by the efforts of the Governments of that region which led, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, to the settlement of the situation in Nicaragua. We hope to see a similar positive outcome in dealing with the other outstanding problems in the region.

My Government welcomes the agreement reached by the five permanent members of the Security Council at the end of last August to settle the problems of Cambodia on the basis of an active United Nations role. The fact that the parties to the conflict have accepted such a framework should encourage optimism and lead to success. We also hope that the ongoing dialogue between North Korea and South Korea will eliminate the causes underlying their differences and realize the desire of their people for unity.

It is most unfortunate that, so far, the efforts of the Secretary-General in addressing the issues of Cyprus and Afghanistan have not been crowned with success. We hope the Secretary-General will pursue his efforts in order to bring about a final solution to the two problems in a manner consistent with the desires of their peoples and the objectives and principles of the Charter.

The noblest objective of the founding fathers of the Charter was the avoidance and prevention of war and the establishment of an international order of peace and security. Events, including the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, have demonstrated that the amassing of weapons by any State in excess of its defensive needs becomes a strong incentive to use its armaments for aggression. The lure of armed force tends to weaken adherence to international law and conventions. That was amply

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

demonstrated by the crimes committed by Iraqi forces against Kuwait. Israel is another case in point. Here again, superior military power has continued to motivate aggression against neighbouring Arab countries.

This is the reason why my country has continuously and strongly supported arms control in the areas of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. While progress has been made in that respect by the two super-Powers, no real attention has been paid to the amassing of weapons on the regional level. We believe there is a need to take necessary action to ensure arms control and prohibit the development of weapons of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East. The Kuwaiti crisis may trigger a renewed arms race in the region and increase the prospects of war and acts of aggression. We must also mention here the military arsenal of Israel, its weapons of mass destruction and, particularly, its nuclear weapons.

Our country wishes to reiterate its welcome to the proposal of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East.

Since independence, my country has annually allocated a significant percentage of its gross national product for aid to the developing countries, through bilateral and multilateral assistance as well as through international financial institutions. In spite of all the pressures we have been facing as a developing country dependent on the single commodity of oil and notwithstanding that commodity's price fluctuations, we have never wavered in giving aid to the needy countries. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Economic Development continues to play a fundamental role in that respect through a number of financial development projects in the developing countries.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

The crisis in Kuwait has dealt a severe blow to international development efforts. The impact of the crisis has been tragic in the case of a number of developing countries. One consequence has been a drastic increase in the price of oil, which has inflicted further severe losses on the developing countries and sent shock waves through the global financial markets, creating a crisis of confidence among investors.

The letters and memoranda received by the Security Council Committee set up in accordance with Security Council resolution 661 (1990) are sufficient proof of the damage caused by the crisis to the economies of many countries that were either directly or indirectly connected by international trade and finance to the countries of the region.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

There is no doubt that the numbers and the plight of displaced Arab and Asian refugees attest to the human suffering brought about by the Iraqi aggression.

My country, which has given basic aid to the countries that have been affected directly, is fully prepared to take part in the international efforts to alleviate the effects of the crisis on the developing countries.

In this context, we support the setting up of an international agency to work in conjunction with the Security Council committee established under resolution 661 (1990) to assess the economic damage caused by the crisis, and assist in the creation of a donor fund to which all countries may contribute to help the countries affected. My country is fully prepared to assume its responsibilities and participate in this effort to save the world from an economic disaster, since it has not been possible to avoid political catastrophe.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that my country has earmarked 1 billion dollars as a contribution towards the efforts aimed at reducing the burden on third world countries caused by the Gulf crisis and the implementation of resolution 661.

The attention of the world has focused as never before on the United Nations which has demonstrated that it is the international instrument capable of dealing with new crises. The last few weeks have proved that co-operation and co-ordination among the great Powers can promote international peace and security in a constructive and indispensable manner in the world of today.

In spite of the grave threat the Gulf crisis has posed to international peace, the concern for international détente shown by the super-Powers through their use of the Security Council demonstrates the vital importance of this international Organization. This concern made many countries, especially the smaller ones and those which do not have all the necessary means to defend their independence, feel that the international system is able to protect them and preserve their

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independence. From this standpoint, our delegation commends the United Nations on the crucial role it has played. We do consider this to be the rebirth of this international Organization, and call on all its Member States to reinforce its role, especially that of the Security Council, in the settlement of international and regional problems.

Mr. OULD DIDI (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me first of all to extend to you the Mauritanian delegation's warmest congratulations on your election to the Presidency of our General Assembly. This election, which is a tribute to your personal qualities, also reflects the esteem enjoyed by your country, Malta, on the international level. I would also like to assure you of our full co-operation in your discharge of your important duties.

To your predecessor, our brother, Joseph Garba, from our sister republic, Nigeria, we pay a well-deserved tribute for the exemplary way in which he conducted the proceedings of the last session.

We should also like to congratulate our Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose dedication and perseverance in the servi e of the ideals of peace, justice and equality embodied by our Organization are recognized by all. We reaffirm our firm support in his constant quest for international peace and security and to ensure respect for human rights and the rights of peoples.

We welcome also the presence amongst us of the delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein and extend our warm congratulations on their admission to the United Nations.

The world today is undergoing profound changes. The extent and consequences of those changes will shape the future of humankind. Though there has been progress towards international détente, serious tensions still remain. Those

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tensions are kept alive by the lack of justice which is rampant in the world both on the economics and information levels.

My country has been a victim of such injustice. In its dispute with Senegal, my country fell victim to a tendentious campaign of misinformation which was meant to cover up the serious violations of human rights suffered by the Mauritanian subjects, and distort the facts, thus making it much more difficult to reach a settlement.

I think, however, that the movement in some situations gives us room to hope for a better world. In Africa, the independence of Namibia is a victory for peace and justice. We welcome our Namibian brethren to the United Nations family.

In South Africa, the dialogue now begun between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the authorities gives us hope that the apartheid system will be dismantled and, in its place, a democratic society that is free from all forms of racial discrimination will arise.

In the Arabian peninsula, we have noted with satisfaction the unification of the people of Yemen. By achieving this unity, the two States have given a pioneering example to the Arab nation.

In Asia, we follow with interest the process under way towards the resolution of the Cambodian problem. In this respect, we call on all the parties to continue to show understanding. Nothing else can make it possible for their people to live in peace with themselves and with their neighbours.

The recent contacts between the two Koreas give us hope that the Korean people will in their turn rediscover unity.

In Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall has eliminated a symbol of confrontation and suspicion between peoples and has brought about the realization

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of the aspirations of the German people, who even today are celebrating their new-found national unity. We congratulate them on it and give them our best wishes.

Despite this general movement towards conciliation in relations between States, situations of conflict continue to occur and develop. In the Arab Gulf, the events of the last few months are cause for extreme disquiet. For our part, Mauritania reaffirms its adherence to the United Nations Charter and international law, as indicated in the letter to this effect which it has addressed to the Secretary-General. Mauritania condemns any use of force to settle differences between States, and rejects the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. Mauritania deplores any measure which would have the effect of threatening security or depriving innocent people, whatever their nationality, of their freedom.

Mauritania's wish is for a satisfactory solution to this crisis to be found in an Arab context. This is the only context that would guarantee lasting peace and harmony in the region.

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If only the Arab approach, in the context of which the Jeddah meeting between Iraq and Kuwait took place, had been pursued after 2 August, it might have made it possible to avoid the deadlock we now face. However, in the very first days of the crisis, we witnessed a sizeable, steady buildup of foreign military forces in the region.

Those who would resort to force in dealing with this crisis will bear a serious responsibility before history, because the conflict that would erupt will prove impossible to contain.

In any case, while reiterating our commitment to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, my country deems it unacceptable and inhuman that there should be any action that aims at depriving an entire population of food and medication.

In the Middle East, Israel still occupies the Arab territories and continues to oppress the Palestinian people in violation of international law. The courageous decisions of the Palestine National Council and the peace initiative taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) have been blocked by Israeli intransigence. The suspension of the cautious dialogue between the United States of America and the PLO has been another great disappointment to all those who had hoped for a peaceful solution to this human tragedy.

However, the heroic Palestinian people's intifadah has demonstrated that people's ability to mobilize itself and showed its determination to regain its rights. It is not conceivable that a world that loves justice and cherishes international law should continue to acquiesce in the daily trampling under foot in Palestine of the most basic of human rights.

In Lebanon, the instability of the situation persists because of the combined impact of domestic divisions and external pressures.

(Mr. Ould Didi, Mauritania)

For its part, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania considers that the Taif agreement provides the appropriate framework for the resolution of Lebanon's domestic problems and the restoration of its civil peace.

In Afghanistan, we regret the tragic infighting between brethren that has continued unabated after the withdrawal of foreign forces. We hope that our Afghan brethren will rise above their differences and achieve unity free from foreign interference.

In the Arab Maghreb, the final settlement of the question of the Western Sahara will enable the Arab Maghreb Union to consolidate its political cohesiveness and economic integration. We renew our full support of the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts to find a solution to the conflict.

Efforts to improve the international political climate will be fruitless unless a solution is found for the economic crisis of the developing countries, especially those in Africa, where the situation is particularly difficult.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations and the World Bank in the areas of information and mobilization.

Thanks to these efforts, the recent Paris United Nations Conference on the least developed countries has resulted in pledges that will give impetus to our development efforts and strengthen our hands in facing up to the consequences of a deteriorating economic situation which has been aggravated, in the case of my country, by the effects of 20 years of drought and the arrival en masse in May 1989 of totally dispossessed refugees and repatriates. The number of those people exceeded 10 per cent of our total population.

Despite the difficulties inherent in such a situation and the scarcity of external aid, some of which has stopped, due to the current economic situation or because of political considerations relating to the events in the Gulf, the policy of my country under the guidance of President Maouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya continues

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its efforts to meet the needs of our people and, at the same time, pursue three main objectives that are essential to our development, namely:

First, the setting up of democratic institutions. For that purpose, free and democratic elections were organized in the course of the past four years to elect representatives that run local affairs. Elections will take place throughout the country before the end of the year. These elections are an important step towards the shouldering by the people of their national responsibilities in conducting their affairs democratically.

Secondly, the eradication by the year 2000 of illiteracy, which is the scourge that afflicts a high percentage of the Mauritanian people. Considerable efforts are currently under way to achieve this ambitious target without which no development will be possible.

Thirdly, the participation of women in all the activities required by national construction. Women, who account for more than 50 per cent of the population, are given every attention in the formulation of our education, health and employment plans.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank all the countries, international institutions and non-governmental organizations which have given and continue to assist us in protecting our environment, developing our resources and mitigating the social effects of the crisis.

The world today is at an historic juncture, and it is up to the United Nations, which embodies the unanimity of all, to ensure the triumph of good over evil. Peace and freedom are legitimate aspirations for all and all peoples deserve them equally without discrimination. The United Nations is duty-bound to give the same weight to all its resolutions.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has faith in the ideals enshrined in our Organization's principles and will always respect those principles.

Mr. LATORTUE (Haiti) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Haitian delegation, may I first of all extend to Mr. Guido de Marco most cordial congratulations on being chosen unanimously to direct the work of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are very pleased about this election, convinced as we are that his outstanding personal qualities and his great experience in international problems are the best guarantee of the success of our work.

I would be remiss if I did not also pay a tribute to Mr. Joseph Garba of Nigeria, whose energy, efficacy and moderation earned him the respect and admiration of everyone during the last session.

(Mr. Latortue, Haiti)

We also congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who deserves our recognition for the successes achieved by the United Nations in recent years. His latest report on the state of the world rightly emphasizes the new opportunities emerging at the dawn of this decade.

We welcome with great satisfaction the admission of Namibia and Liechtenstein as full Members of our Organization.

Forty-five years after the creation of the United Nations, historical events are accelerating rapidly. The cold war is almost over, as the recent treaty on the final settlement of the question of Germany has shown. There are encouraging signs of solutions to problems on all continents, which only yesterday were criss-crossed by many conflicts that by force of circumstance had become stakes in the East-West competition. The cause of peace continues to make progress. The same is true of democracy, which has remodelled the post-war political and ideological landscape.

But no one can underestimate the potential of conflicts threatening this new peace dynamic. From Liberia to Ethiopia, from Central America to Afghanistan, many hotbeds of tension remain, quite apart from a large number of local or regional conflicts that for the past four decades the United Nations has been unable to prevent or control.

Moreover, the storm currently raging in the Arab/Persian Gulf is an unprecedented threat to world peace.

Along with those uncertainties, the growth of extreme poverty in the countries of the South dramatically emphasizes that the international economic crisis is not over - quite the contrary.

The international community is now living in a time of a dual contrast, between peace and war and between the economic euphoria in the North and the growing impoverishment of the South. It is against that background that the

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General Assembly is beginning its forty-fifth session, whose work should have a lasting effect on the new decade, full of so many challenges.

Exactly two months ago the whole world was plunged into a state of shock: the premeditated aggression against the sovereignty of Kuwait initiated the gravest crisis in the past 20 years. The invasion became annexation. They are equally unacceptable in law and international morality. Unless there is a radical change, there is the risk that the logic of war which seems to prevail will commit us to a military confrontation, with unpredictable consequences.

In the face of that danger, the Republic of Haiti urges the United Nations to play to the utmost its unique role of trying to avert the major conflict that the whole world so much fears. We believe that a spreading conflagration is not inevitable, so long as the party primarily concerned decides to admit its errors and to respect the principles of the United Nations Charter which have been so flagrantly violated.

In that connection, we believe there are two basic requirements: the complete restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty, without any reservation, and the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupation forces, reflecting the status quo of 1 August 1990. We should give diplomacy a chance to attain those objectives through negotiations, in accordance with Security Council resolution 660 (1990) and subsequent Council decisions, all of which have the firm support of the Haitian Government.

Clearly, for a peaceful outcome of the conflict Iraq must take the first steps towards a negotiated settlement. Therefore, the Republic of Haiti joins the unanimous appeal to the Government of Iraq to heed the voice of wisdom and reason. It is not too late.

Still with regard to the Middle East, we cannot overlook the deadlock in the search for a solution to the Israeli-Arab question, which has been aggravated by

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violence that has been endemic for three years now in the occupied territories, presenting another major challenge to peace. Hopes of progress towards a solution seem to depend on the opening of a dialogue between all the interested parties, especially between the Israelis and the Palestinians, within the framework of negotiations acceptable to both parties. In any event, the Haitian Government strongly supports the efforts already initiated with a view to beginning a negotiation process on the basis of commonly acknowledged principles, contained in particular in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). For it should be repeated that the key to any solution lies in Israel's right to live in peace within secure borders, internationally recognized and guaranteed, and in the Palestinian people's exercise of its legitimate rights to a homeland and self-determination.*

The Republic of Haiti cannot remain indifferent to the fate of Lebanon, threatened with disintegration because of a bloody and unceasing tragedy. In that friendly country we have witnessed with alarm successive violations, which remain unpunished, of the basic principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. While condemning such acts, whatever the reasons given by those responsible, the Haitian Government calls for respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions, so that the Lebanese people may finally, after the torment of the past 15 years, regain control of their destiny, with full territorial integrity.

The struggle for peace in the Middle East, with which Haiti fully associates itself, is part of a larger picture: the creation during the current decade of an international environment in which war may finally be outlawed.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

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Although the world's attention has rightly been upon the Gulf crisis, there has recently been an exceptional improvement in the international climate with regard to the maintenance of peace. That is especially true of the situation in southern Africa. The year now coming to an end has seen Namibia gain its independence after a long decolonization process in which the United Nations played a key role - and we pay it a public tribute for that.

There was a first glimmer of hope in South Africa with the freeing of Nelson Mandela and his comrades in the struggle. Praiseworthy initiatives have since been made by the South African Government. Nevertheless, the risk of civil war threatening that country has lessened the prospects of a rapid dismantling of the apartheid system, whose structure remains basically unchanged. The Republic of Haiti has, because of its very nature, endorsed the aspirations of the black majority of South Africa and the struggle of its liberation movements. We believe it to be our duty once again to call for the continuation of sanctions against the Pretoria régime until it shows proof of its determination to put an end to its universally condemned policy.

The Haitian Government welcomes the outline of a national solution to the crises that have torn Angola and Mozambique since their independence.

Similarly, the efforts to settle the question of Western Sahara seem to give us reason for hope. The Haitian Government continues to hope that a solution will be found taking fully into account the inalienable right of the Saharan people to self-determination, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Similarly, we note with satisfaction the progress achieved towards a settlement of the conflicts in Asia.

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Under the auspices of the United Nations and with the tireless support of France - to which we would like to pay a tribute for its sustained activities - an overall settlement of the issue of Cambodia seems to be at hand. The Republic of Haiti is pleased for the Khmer people, which after so great a struggle is now emerging from a long nightmare.

Furthermore, in view of the recent developments in the Korean peninsula, the time seems to have come for the Republic of Korea finally to be admitted as a full-fledged member of the great family of the United Nations. Haiti fully supports its aspirations.

Closer to home on the American continent, Central America, after being a bloody pawn in East-West rivalry for more than a decade, has committed itself to the Esquipulas II Treaty and the quest for a peaceful solution to the many conflicts there and the building of a new democratic order. In this regard too we should emphasize that, to its credit, the United Nations has lived up to its mission. The Republic of Haiti hopes it will continue to help the Central American nations finally to put an end to the suffering caused by civil war and, above all, to find a way to development - the essential element of peace, without which any democratic endeavour would be illusory.

We also wish to emphasize the exceptional factors that have come together and fostered the dawning of freedom in the East and boundless prospects for stability, security and peace in Europe. The Haitian Government and people would like to hail, first and foremost, the consecration today of German unification - an outstanding symbol of the beginning of a new age for Europe and the world as a whole.

Finally, the Republic of Haiti is pleased at the incontestable progress achieved in the limitation of the chemical, bacteriological and nuclear-arms race.

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The excellent steps that the super-Powers have been taking for some time now are full of promise. For us, as for the entire third world, there is much hope of achieving real disarmament. This closely affects prospects for improving the living conditions of hundreds of millions of human beings now suffering or dying of hunger. As is rightly recalled in the latest report of the World Bank on development, any reduction by 10 per cent of military expenditures by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would automatically involve a doubling of official assistance, if that is indeed desired.

In that regard, we support the recent appeal of the Secretary-General for increased assistance to the emerging democracies of the third world, whose peoples should not be tempted to associate democracy with dire poverty and misery, as was so rightly emphasized by Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

It is time we realized that democracy also has an essential socio-economic dimension, without which it loses its raison d'être.

The Haitian delegation cannot fail to express its concern and bitterness in the face of the growing economic gap and disparities between North and South. The vigorous economic expansion that has taken place in the past eight years has become the norm for the industrialized world. As a hostage to this growth, perhaps it is no longer development but stagnation and regression that have been the lot of most third world nations. It suffices to consider the spectacular decline of the average income in Latin America, which is at a level lower than that of 20 years ago.

The situation in sub-Saharan Africa and in so-called least developed countries is the most cruel example of this. In the face of the growing complexity of the problems facing the third world, which in fact have affected the prospects for lasting peace, we are all bound to note the need for a critical examination of the

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policies and machinery that gave rise to the enormous confusion of the 1980s, which have quite rightly been called the lost decade.

In that regard, the Haitian delegation believes it must emphasize some of the serious setbacks that have come about as regards the objectives of the international development strategy of the past decade.

First, official assistance has never achieved the desired objectives in terms of volume, and has most often been simply a palliative rather than input that was indispensable for lasting development.

Secondly, for very dubious reasons we have too often seen the freezing of vital programmes of co-operation, sometimes unilaterally and selectively, by creditors, when the extremely vulnerable economies of our countries need public assistance that is both stable and predictable.

Thirdly, many constraints have been imposed from abroad, stemming in particular from rigorously applied programmes of structural adjustment at the cost of abandonment of essential social services and cessation of productive investment. But instead of the co-operation that we expected in return, the countries concerned have only been offered the prospect of market forces, as if they are our fragile economies' only hope of salvation in facing the challenges of underdevelopment.

Finally, how could we fail to emphasize the stranglehold of debt-servicing and the problem of the inverse transfer of resources and the drop in commodity prices, which are now lower than they have been in 30 years?

It is not surprising that the economic recovery of the North has not trickled down to the South as expected.

That is why the Haitian delegation believes that the question of the establishment of a new international economic order is still a timely one, for at

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the beginning of this decade it seems to us there can be no more urgent task than that of attacking the structural causes of the poverty and underdevelopment raging in the third world. We believe in this respect that it is necessary to adopt a series of priority measures, in particular the following.

First, a significant increase in financial facilities for development financing;

Second, the establishment of a system of international co-operation that takes fully into account the specific problems of the most vulnerable countries and those countries most affected by the current crisis, especially the least developed ones;

Third, special support for developing countries that have been affected to help them deal with the substantial increase in energy costs;

Fourth, equitable treatment of external indebtedness;

Fifth, a restructuring of multilateral institutions, whose role in development financing should be in full accordance with the objectives assumed by the United Nations;

Sixth, a revitalizing of South-South co-operation and the process of regional integration;

Seventh, the entry into force, so often postponed of the common fund for commodities.

That having been said, we cannot fail to pay a tribute to the many efforts made in various places that have clearly shown that the idea of enlightened international solidarity is not a dead letter. An example is the new programme of action adopted at the recent Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The steps taken by France to cancel the debt for those countries constitute a positive change. It is incumbent on the international community to make those changes a reality.

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The General Assembly has already been seized of a request from the provisional Government of Haiti on the organization of forthcoming elections. I would be remiss if I did not refer to the situation prevailing in Haiti today. A major multi-dimensional crisis has afflicted Haiti for more than four years now. After the fall of dictatorship the Haitian people regained its public freedoms and clearly demonstrated its refusal to return to it. Since 7 February 1986, the date of liberation, various Government formulas have failed in the face of the irrepressible desire for change expressed by the Haitian people. This period of searching has given rise to a whole series of difficulties for the economy and the good name of Haiti. The abortive elections of 29 November 1987 constituted one of the saddest such episodes. Since then, in addition to the massive disinvestment that resulted, an almost total freeze on public development assistance has strengthened and intensified the national trauma provoked by that unspeakable act.

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The Haitian people have been noting with anger the increased degradation of the infrastructures. Illiteracy, which is now at 80 per cent, has not been reduced. Even hope - which brought the Haitian nation onto a new path - has now been threatened. It is in order to stop this vicious circle that the Provisional Government of the Republic, which resulted from a broad, national consensus, has committed itself firmly to putting the nation, amidst all these difficulties, onto the path to free and honest elections which have for too long been postponed.

That is why since its coming to power the Government of Her Excellency, Mrs. Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, while endeavouring to find ways and means to improve living conditions for the Haitian people, has asked for bilateral and multilateral assistance and especially assistance from the United Nations to help the Provisional Electoral Council, the constitutional body entrusted with the task of organizing independent elections, fully to carry out its mandate.

In this regard the Haitian people and their Government would be grateful to all friendly countries from all continents, and in particular to the fraternal countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Latin America for any spirit of solidarity they might show with regard to Haiti and any interest they might show in the success of the electoral process.

The date for the elections has just been officially set for 16 December by the Provisional Electoral Council. Nothing can now stop the march towards democratic elections organized in the best climate of security which the armed forces of Haiti have committed themselves to guarantee. We express the hope that the United Nations, in turn, will respond favourably and on an urgent basis to the request made by the Government of Haiti for appropriate assistance. I should like to reiterate the appeal made by the Provisional President of the Republic to the entire international community that finally Haiti will not remain alone: that on

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7 February 1991 a new, freely elected President might take office, thereby putting Haiti irreversibly among the growing community of democratic nations.

At a time when a new chapter is opening in history, the current state of the world offers us areas of sadness as well as areas of promise for the future. This picture shows the degree of urgency with which the international community must meet the challenges to peace and international security. No less important is the gap that continues to grow between the rich and the poor: the progress achieved in East-West relations should not obscure this dangerous chasm.

We welcome the fact that, increasingly, people are showing confidence in the United Nations in meeting the many challenges that await us at the dawning of the year 2000. Among these challenges we would mention the consolidation of peace, of democracy, the preservation of our threatened environment, the campaign against drug abuse, the constant promotion of human rights, and, above all, the emergence of humanity from a level of dire necessity to a level where no one will lack any necessity.

The Republic of Haiti for its part is convinced that developing as we are in a global community, we have no recourse but to international solidarity with interdependence and an increased awareness of our common destiny if we are to meet these challenges.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.